

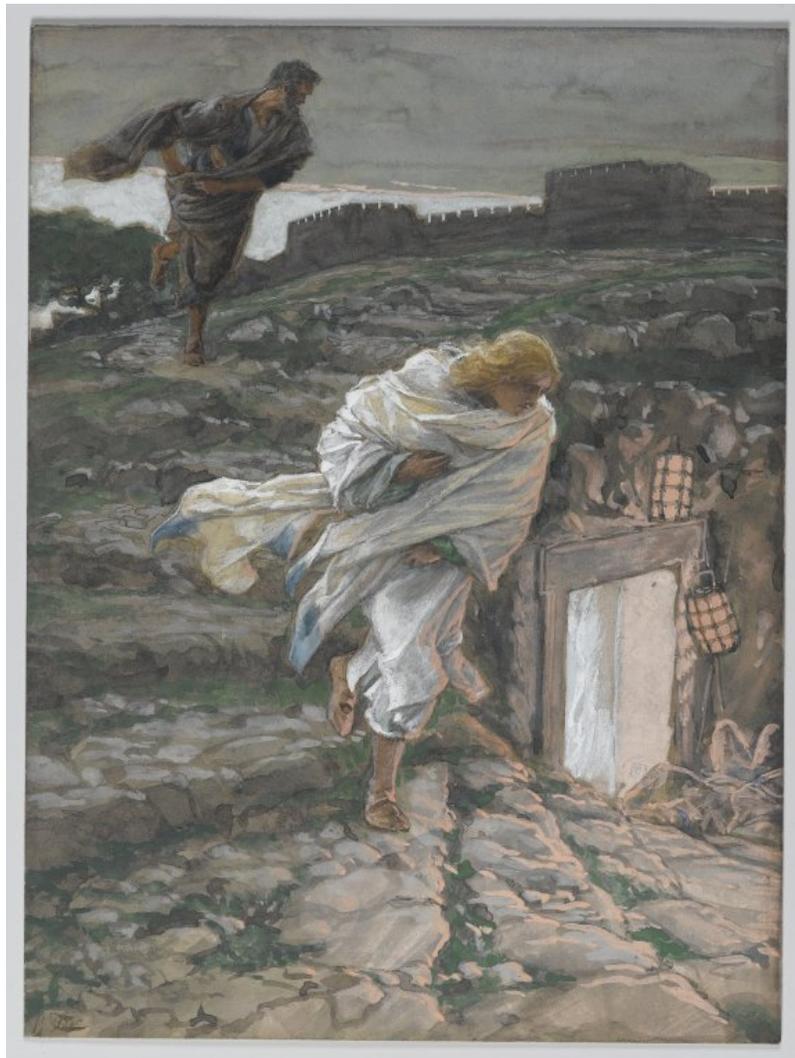


Christian Art

Daily Gospel Reading and Art Reflection

John 20:2-8

John ran faster than Peter to the Tomb



Saint Peter and Saint John Run to the Sepulchre,
Drawn by **James Tissot (1836-1902),**
Drawn between 1886 and 1894,
Gouache and graphite on paper
© Brooklyn Museum, New York

Daily Gospel Reading

John 20:2-8

On the first day of the week Mary of Magdala came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. **They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first;** he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed.

Reflection on the Gouache on Paper

Only two days ago we celebrated the birth of Jesus. Yesterday we looked at the martyrdom of Saint Stephen. Today we are at the tomb of Christ. Life is short! So between birth and death we better make something of our lives...

But let us look more closely at the sentence St John writes in today's Gospel '*They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first*'. In the first instance, it may seem like a trivial bit of information we get told. Why is all of this so important for John to tell us that he ran faster than Peter? John is telling us that his faith was stronger than Peter's by running faster, more focussed, more driven. But John knew deep down that he wouldn't find Christ at the tomb anymore. He did not even have to enter the tomb to know this. He stayed outside as his faith told him that Christ had risen from the dead.

Peter on the other hand did have to enter the tomb to see with his own eyes that Christ wasn't there anymore. But, it is on Peter that Christ built his Church. He might at the time not have been the man holding the most faith compared to the other disciples, but nevertheless Christ handed the keys of the Church to him.

This image by James Tissot, shows John ahead of Peter, running to the tomb. John has a sense of urgency about him. He was running towards The Lord, just as we are invited to run towards Him, especially in these days of Christmas. Run towards His light... where Christ is waiting to meet us...